DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 823 IR 057 945

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TITLE	Information Literacy for the Skeptical Library Director.
PUB DATE	2000-07-00
NOTE	10p.; In: Virtual Libraries: Virtual Communities. Abstracts, Fulltext Documents and PowerPoint Presentations of Papers and Demos Given at the International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL) Conference (Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, July 3-7, 2000); see IR 057 942.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://educate.lib.chalmers.se/iatul/proceedcontents/qutpap/breivik_full.html.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Libraries; Access to Information; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Information Literacy; *Information Skills; *Information Technology; Library Administration; Library Directors; *Library Role; Library Services; *Lifelong Learning
IDENTIFIERS	National Forum on Information Literacy

ABSTRACT

This paper begins by providing background on the information literacy movement, including the educational reform efforts of the 1980s, a higher education summit conference, and the 1989 American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report. Other highlights include: the information literacy triangle; providing universal access by getting the Internet into all schools and public libraries; the need for funding to educate people to take advantage of technological advancements; definitions of information literacy; a UNESCO report addressing the importance of lifelong learning; the Global Knowledge Partnership; and the efforts of the National Forum on Information Literacy. The following practical steps for academic library directors are suggested: (1) take time to think through the concept of information literacy; (2) ask questions about information literacy on campus; (3) find out what the barriers to information literacy are; and (4) celebrate successes. (MES)

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ED 447 823

INFORMATION LITERACY FOR THE SKEPTICAL LIBRARY DIRECTOR

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In the United States in the 1980s, there was a major educational reform effort that focused on both K-12 and higher education. During those years it seemed that every organization that had anything to do with education, and a lot that had nothing to do with education, wrote a report on how the educational system in America was not working and recommended how things should change. One of the things that was really remarkable about these reports which tapered off at the end of the 80's (so we're talking only 20 years ago) was that only two of them mentioned libraries. Not only did they not mention libraries, they didn't mention information technology. They didn't even mention the Information Age, even though Alvin Toffler [1] years before had sent out the alert that we were in the Information Age. So it was remarkable that so many brilliant people, or at least people who thought they were brilliant, could be suggesting how to reform education while ignoring the world in which current and all future generations were going to live and work.

So in a spirit of frustration and concern Bob Wedgeworth, who was at one time Executive Director of the American Library Association and at that time Dean of the library school at Columbia, and I got together. I had called him and said, "We need to change higher education; and, if you want to be part of doing that, let's meet for breakfast before you fly back to New York City." I remember that he laughed and said "Well, you're not going to tell me anything more about this are you?" and I replied "No, not until we meet." We got together the next morning and came up with an idea. It was for a one time collaboration between the University of Colorado, where I was working, and Columbia University. With support form the CU President and others at Columbia, we organized a higher education summit. We also invited not only librarians, but the highest, most prestigious people from higher education including Ernie Boyer, whom some of you may know. His book, College: the Undergraduate Experience in America [2] came out very late in the reform effort and was the only one which envisioned a role for libraries in the improvement of learning. In it he said it was important for students to spend as much time in the library as they did in the classroom learning how to use the whole range of information resources. We invited this esteemed higher education leader, and he came! And others did too. Going into the conference, we didn't know what would happen. Would they just laugh at us? That was a possibility, but we also knew that nothing would change if we did not take the risk. Then we locked them away in old New York Governor Harriman's estate on the Hudson River, and for three days we talked about the role of libraries in quality education.

Out of the conference came a book [3], but more importantly out of it came the beginning of the information literacy movement, as we know it today. One of the people at that conference was Margaret Chisholm, the incoming president of the American Library Association, and she called me and said, "This is too important to stop here. And it's got to be expanded to include K-12. Do you think we can get together a prestigious enough group of educational leaders to come together with librarians to continue this dialogue?" And that's what we did. We recruited to the effort people like the Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators and the Executive Director of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. Seven education leaders came together with six librarians and produced in 1989 the ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report [4] which was released in Washington, DC, as part of the ALA Midwinter meeting at a press conference.

One of the recommendations that came out of the report was the formation of an ongoing collaboration on information literacy, and I will now confess something that very few people know. The organizations

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that were involved with the original committee came together with a couple of other people who were at the press conference and who immediately bought into the importance of people becoming effective information consumers, and we said "OK, what other organizations should we ask to join this collaboration?" We came up with a list and they said (because I chaired the original committee), "Patricia, you go and write all these organizations and tell them to come to a meeting and so we can get started." I had one moment of sheer panic. What if I wrote to all these non-library organizations and invited them to come and nobody came? How embarrassing it would be in front of these people who had been part of the effort. Well, my fears were unfounded. People came.

I tell this story about my fears, because it really sets the context for what I want to say to you today. What we are about in promoting information literacy is really important in terms of people's lives; if we keep information literacy as a library issue, if we fear being rejected, if we fear losing control by partnering with educators and others, we are never going to get anywhere. This is not a library issue. This is an educational issue. This is an economic development issue. This is a health issue. This is a matter of life and death for a lot of people. And we have something to offer that the rest of the world doesn't know about because we are the experts in information management. We are the experts in helping people connect with information they need. But what I see in my own country is a reluctance to let go. We like to stand up in front of a group of students and give lectures. Now we know that lecturing doesn't work. That's not how people learn. But we want to lecture anyway, and we don't really don't really trust those professors or those teachers to do it because they don't really understand it the way we do. As a result we are not making nearly as much progress as we hope for. I want all of you to take a piece of paper and pencil, and I want you to write down how many library conferences you went to last year, and the approximate number of days you spent at these conferences or in work to prepare for obligations you had at the conferences. I did it myself yesterday, because I thought what a wonderful group IATUL is, and maybe I should add this group to my list of library meetings that I regularly attend. And I started writing down the national, state and university meetings that I really need to attend as part of my responsibilities as Dean of San Jose State University Library plus some other musts like the National Forum on Information Literacy. You know what I came up with? Averaging only 3 days a conference (which is really underestimating because of adds like the kangaroo petting and the other nice things that we did at this conference) I came up with a month. A whole solid month! And that was without counting preparation time. Now assuming that we all have libraries that we need to operate and assuming that we are going to take some vacation and not lose track of our families (all of which are very important), when do we have time to talk to non-librarians? When do we have time to suggest to them that we have an answer to some of the problems and issues with which they are struggling? For example, part of economic development is an information problem, and economic development comes from small businesses. Where do small businesses get their information from? There was some research done in the United States that found that small business people when they want advice go to a personal friend. Not necessarily a lawyer, or a banker, or anybody who really knows anything about anything, but somebody they just trust on a personal level. Now if you happen to be well educated and have a wide group of professional colleagues you might do all right in that process, but most small business people don't. Their friends don't know more than they do; and then we wonder why so many small businesses fail. Don't you have something to offer to help your community or your country, promote the success of small businesses? I think you do.

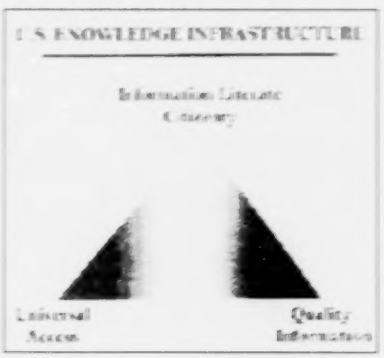
How about health? All you have to do is really get sick or have somebody get sick in your family and you want to know everything there is on that illness, and you really want local information because that's where you are going to get your help. When I was in Michigan there was a conference of regional government people. One of the men in his speech said there were over 40,000 web sites that had medical information, and the gentlemen commented that he wondered how many people had died from information they had received over the web. I have here an article from Good Housekeeping (It's one of those magazines that tells you how to cook delicious meals and then tells you how to diet to take the weight off.) The article is entitled, "Warning! The Internet could be Hazardous to Your Health." [5] Don't we have something to offer people to better manage information to meet their health needs? Of course, we do.

Let me suggest to you that given this rising awareness of problems related to too much information, we have a unique window of opportunity to significantly move our communities, our states, and our

countries forward in dealing with 21st Century information management. People are starting to question. "Hey, wait a minute. Sure there is a lot of information out there, but is that enough? What about the quality of it? What about the people who don't have access to it? I don't know about in your countries, but the phrase "the Digital Divide" is making our newspapers a lot these days. It's a hot topic. With all the developments in information technology and Internet use, there is only a small group of people that are getting richer and richer. In fact, in Silicon Valley we have a major problem with custodians, the people who cook the fast food and secretaries. They can't afford to live in Silicon Valley any more. There was an article in my paper a few months ago documenting the same problem in Japan. We have a few people getting richer and richer. The poor are not getting poorer, but they are not getting richer so the gap is getting bigger and bigger.

One must give the Clinton/Gore administration a lot of credit, because they put information technology on our national radar screen, and they have really pushed to get Internet access for everybody. But it's not lessening that gap between the have and have-nots. It's just as wide as it was. There are two other things besides access that are necessary for closing that digital divide. The information that people need must be available and it must be quality information or the access is of little or no value. Of course, we have a bit of a problem considering quality control regarding information in the United States, because freedom of speech is really important to us. Besides, how would you control the Internet for quality if you wanted to? But even adequate information and Internet access cannot close that gap in the digital divide.

Only if we also have people who can navigate through that overwhelming amount of information including the information junk that is out there to find the information they need; only if they are smart enough to know when they should not go to the Internet but a book or a government agency or some other community source then we can bridge the gap. To move information have-nots to being information haves all three elements must be present: access, quality information and information savvy people. Indeed, any sound information policy must contain those three components.



Information Literacy Triangle

In America we are already doing very well with universal access by getting Internet into all schools and public libraries, but we don't really know how much good the access is accomplishing. One of the last things I did at Wayne State University was help one of our faculty members get a grant to study African Americans in five major cities who have gained access to Internet through public libraries to see was it making a difference to the quality of their lives. We don't know whether it is making a difference or not. If all they are doing is sending email to friends and relatives, the chances are that there is little impact on their quality of life. We need more research in that area. In the United States we are moving toward universal access; and now the intent is to try to get the Internet into every home. But I would argue that Internet access is simply not enough. Access is not going to help people who cannot find helpful information on the Internet or if they can't find information because it's just not there (which is usually the local and regional information that is not commercially viable for somebody to package that and put it up on online). Moreover, far too often the problem is far too much information being available which puts a lot of burden on people to find their way through it, and how can they navigate through that tidal

wave without adequate training?

What would happen if every research dollar the U.S. puts into technology research would include a requirement for a small percentage of the funds to be set aside to educate people to take advantage of the resulting technological advancements? I believe we would see a much better return on our research dollars in areas in which technology has had disappointing results to date. For example, has technology really improved education in your country? It has not in America. Why? Because teachers don't have the materials to integrate into the curriculum and don't know how to do it. We're spending lots of money to train teachers how to use technology but not on software development or on how to facilitate teachers' integrating technology resources into their lessons. Nor do we have school library specialists in a lot of our schools to help bridge this gap. So our great investment in technology is paying off poorly in education, and more and more people are being disillusioned by the lack of progress.

Now what is information literacy? Nancy mentioned a lot of terms: user education, bibliographic instruction. I asked a bunch of college students one time what they thought bibliographic instruction was, and they said it has something to do with bibliographies. So why we ever used that term I don't know. But when we discuss information literacy, we are not talking about library instruction. We are not talking about bibliographic instruction. Library and bibliographic instruction are primarily watered down reference courses where librarians point to good print and online resources that can be helpful for a particular course or assignment. On the other hand, Information Literacy is an outcome. It is a student learning outcome. It doesn't have to do with the input, it has to do with what people can do after they have the input. Do they know when they have an information need? (That is the hardest thing of all. People know they have a problem, but frequently they don't know that they have an information need to address that problem.) Can they identify the kind of information that can help them solve that problem or issue at hand? Once they figure out the kind of information help, then can they locate it? Next and of greatest importance can they evaluate that information effectively? This is actually the heart of the written definition in the 1989 ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report. What has happened since that report was written is the Internet; so, although evaluation of information has always been important, given that tidal wave of information that is overwhelming people, evaluative skills are even more critical today than in 1989. Finally can you organize the information you have chosen and can you use it effectively for whatever need you have. If you can do those things, you are information literate and you are prepared for lifelong learning. There is, in fact, in many countries a growing concern for a lifelong learning workforce, and this is another opportunity for promoting information literacy.

Thanks to Alan Bundy I found a report which probably a lot more of you are familiar with than I. It is an UNESCO report of the International Commission of Education for the 21st Century.[6] The chair of that commission is Jacques Delors. The report talks about some of those lists we had earlier in this conference regarding the tensions that exist and are pulling us apart. The tensions between the global and the local. The tension between the universal and the individual. The tension between tradition and modernity. The tension between long term and short term considerations. The tensions between the need for competition and the concern for equality of opportunity. Delors says in the introduction, "This has led us to rethink and update the concept of lifelong education so to reconcile three forces, competition which provides incentives, cooperation which gives strength and solidarity which unites." [7] The recommendations of the report include that lifelong learning goes beyond continuing education at a university: "It should open up opportunities for learning for all, for many different purposes-offering them a second or a third chance, satisfying their desire for knowledge and beauty or their desire to surpass themselves, or making it possible to broaden and deepen strictly vocational forms of training, including practical training. In short, 'learning throughout life' must take advantage of all the opportunities offered by society." [8] But taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by society will depend upon a peoples' ability to know they have a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively use information. That is one of the reasons why when a country decides to get serious about lifelong learning, information literacy becomes a very natural partner because lifelong learning in an Information Age can't happen without a population, without a citizenry, that is information literate.

Now it may be that your policy leaders may need a little nudge to make the connection between a lifelong learning workforce and information literacy, but it is such an obvious one. I have been in many conversations discussing issues like the Digital Divide, and just like the cartoons where you see the light bulb go off overhead; I see it happening. It's so obvious once they think about it--which is why we can't spend all that time at library meetings. We need to be turning on the bulbs of policy makers and the keepers of the purse strings. Perhaps you can do this with those you work with directly, but you can do it with others as well and sometimes more easily. For example, academic librarians can do a lot to foster the promotion of information literacy at the school level, because you don't appear self serving. We need to encourage our campuses to articulate to high schools information literacy as one of the abilities expected of students coming to our campuses. We are not shy in saying that students must have four years of math or other requirements, and we can influence our campuses to let schools know they can help students be successful, both as academicians and in their life, they by developing information literacy skills. Moreover, there are expectations that students will have some fundamentals mastered before they get to you. (Wouldn't it be wonderful not to have to start every information literacy at the college level at the very least common denominator?) When you start these campus conversations, you need to place information literacy within the context of the things that our campuses and schools are already concerned about and are talking about. You need to position information literacy as part of the larger set of critical thinking skills.

Information Literacy Umbrella

Remember when our campuses started emphasizing computer literacy? Well it just is not enough. There is library literacy, media literacy, network literacy and visual literacy. Even before that, we have to be concerned about basic reading skills. There are two national literacy organizations in the National Forum on Information Literacy because being able to read without being able to find the information needed to read only has you half way there. So we have to start with the basic literacy, and then information literacy brings all the other literacies together as a major component in the critical thinking skills. It's the old Liberal Arts concept: people have to be prepared for lifelong learning to be successful in the world.

I don't know how many of you are familiar with the Global Knowledge Partnership, which is a very interesting group made up of a number of UNESCO units, the World Bank, some countries, the Canadian Broadcasting Company, etc. It is a very eclectic group (even more eclectic than our National Forum on Information Literacy) which has stated that not just access, but "effective use of knowledge and information" [9] are increasingly important factors in sustainable economic and social development for individual communities and nations. Their concern focuses not only on the problems of the haves and the have-nots among individuals but also among countries. This group is evidence that more and more people are starting to ask the right kinds of questions, and this provides some windows of opportunity to nudge people into realizing the importance of information literacy.

Key to this "nudging" is to start with other people's agendas. If we start by promoting information literacy or even libraries, we are just one other self serving group of people out there selling something, but what we really have are solutions to offer as policy makers grapple with major concerns. So, for example, I was brainstorming with somebody yesterday about how you in Australia could determine

what the particular issues and key interests were of your legislators. Who really cares, for example, about the plight of the "at risk" people? Whether that's your native population or just children who aren't in homes and communities where they have had much going for them. Who is really championing for those people? Talk to them about what information literacy can offer to address this challenge. Look for ways to bring to the table on a regular basis not just librarians but people from other groups who share some concerns about people empowerment. This is what the Forum has done. I think it is still unique. We have over 75 members, and I'm delighted to say that both Nancy and Michael have indicated to me that IATUL wishes to become a member. I think it will be good for your organization, too; because we maintain a web page (Infolit.org if you want to view it) and on it we keep a profile of all of our member organizations. To people who may not know IATUL, it will give visibility, and it will also give you an opportunity on a regular basis to share through the Forum some of your information literacy accomplishments.

The approach we have taken with the Forum is that we do not set up an agenda and get everybody to work towards it. Rather we work to support them as they seek to promote information literacy in ways that are meaningful for their memberships. That is what they are there for--to serve their membership, not the Forum, not librarianship. This approach has worked exceedingly well. It has frequently meant, for example, members from one organization speaking at another's annual conference. For example, I've been asked to speak at the November conference of the National Council of Teachers of English. Or for their publications, somebody from one organization will work with another to get articles into print. Some of the organizations have prepared policy statements for adoption by their memberships regarding information literacy. But in every case the action is empowering the organizations to do what they need to do for their membership. For example, when the Association of College & Research Libraries came out with its standards for information literacy [10], the American Association for Higher Education endorsed it. (AAHE is a member of the Forum.) AAHE also asked me to do an article calling attention to the fact that this is only the second time in the history of the organization it has endorsed standards and to tie information literacy into its current focus on "the engaged campus." So the Forum's main focus is on looking for those windows of opportunities where what a particular organization is doing has a match with what information literacy can support and being willing to step in and do whatever is needed.

However, occasionally we do come together to do some things jointly. An issue of particular concern to the Forum is teacher education. If teachers don't know anything about their libraries, if they're not information literate, what are the chances they are going to construct curriculums that include information literacy? So when the accrediting council for colleges of teacher education was revising their standards, this was a key issue for us. So the Forum as a whole agreed we needed to try to make sure that information literacy got in this document, and a group of our members that were particularly involved with teacher education lead the effort. We fed in comments at several points in the review process, and I am happy to report we got information literacy incorporated into the national standards.

Another thing is that the Forum is undertaking as a group effort (and may be of particular interest to IATUL) is the holding of an international invitational congress on information literacy. (The Forum, incidentally, has no dues, no officers, and no official status, which is one of the reasons our meetings are so exciting. We never get bogged down in running the organization!) For this effort we are going to need to use some of our members to help position us to partner with UNESCO and other key players. The issues to be explored include: What aspects of information literacy are unique to a country? What apply across all countries? What can we learn from conversations together? What can we learn by pulling in leadership people from different countries regarding research?

Please note: we are not talking about bringing together librarians. They alone cannot make a difference. We're talking about organizing an event that would bring together leadership teams from countries. So to come and participate, you would need to include a policy maker from your Ministry of Education, somebody who has leadership responsibility in your country's economic development, and whatever other agencies determined by the planning committee. Teams such as these can go a long way to ensuring that something will really happen when people go back to their countries. So I'm hoping that many of you will be interested in trying to assemble teams to participate in that congress; and our hope would be that, if we pull off the congress all right, then the following year we could have an open

conference and everyone who is interested could come with or without teams.

OK, I did promise some practical advice. So I'm going to back off the national and international scenes to address campus issues. We have had a lot of opportunity at this conference to hear the challenges that surround us and they are almost overwhelming. The truth of the matter is that we're not getting more money. We're going to be expected to do everything we ever did and a lot of other things on top of it. (We're also expecting our library schools, without expanding curriculum, to teach everything that we learned in school plus all the new stuff, and that's not working very well either.) And I don't know how unless one is at a really, really big major research institution, (e.g. in Wayne State University where I had a University Press reporting to me) that a librarian can really make a significant difference in terms of packaging information. I know digitization is important, but most of us are in situations without the resources that allow us to move far in that direction.

So I'd like to argue (I'll let the research library directors attack me later.) for not worrying quite so much about digitizing to devote our time and energy to trying to improve people's lives. This can only happen when we change the learning process; when we help our campuses move from a teaching mode of open-head-and-pour-in-information. There is an ASHE/ERIC publication that has pulled together all the research on lecturing, and it's pretty scary in terms of what students don't remember, how quickly. (Which always makes me nervous when I make a speech like this, because you're not going to be tested next week and so you are going to remember even less than that 10% or 14% which is the norm.)

On most of our campuses now, at least in my country, there is a lot of pressure to switch from a focus on teaching to a focus on student learning outcomes. Instead of saying "We're a great institution because we have x number of professors with PhDs and our students come to us with grade point averages of y;" now it's "Our students can do ... when they graduate." Today there are too many business people and too many legislators who are tired of college graduates who can't write a decent report, who can't problem solve, who can't work together in teams; and so we have a very strong emphasis on assessing student learning outcomes. That's why things like the ACRL standards are really important, because it's giving tools to librarians to be able to respond to the need for assessment.

But how can students become information literate? It can only happen when students' learning experiences go beyond their being passive recipients of information who can regurgitate information for a test before they really forget it, but to students who are consistently across the curriculum given opportunities to practice finding and evaluating information for an issue or problem at hand. We're really taking about a more active undergraduate learning experience, and a lot of educators are concerned about it. They may call it problem based learning, they may call it resource based learning or in the medical field, they may call it informatics. It doesn't matter what they call it. They are concerned that students leave the campuses prepared to solve problems and move ahead in their careers, and we should be aligning ourselves on our campuses with the people who are concerned about those issues. If need be, let's not call it information literacy but rather use their vocabulary.

And directors, and this time I will speak to directors, to do that is going to take a lot more than just your reference librarians or your liaison librarians going out and making friends with faculty members who are sympathetic. That kind of shotgun approach here and there isn't going to accomplish any kind of consistency in guaranteeing students their basic rights to learn these skills while students on your campuses. You need to be involved in ensuring across the general education curriculum students' learning basic information literacy abilities. When they get into the majors, information literacy must be there tailored to what they are going to have to do when they are out in the real world. This isn't going to happen without the director's active involvement. Now I realize that there are very few campuses where the other deans are asking the deans or directors of the libraries to play a leadership role in reforming learning and moving from teaching to learning. But oh my! don't you have a lot to offer to those issues?! You need to be out there working at the policy level; because, unless you are, your librarians can never be a significant partner in the process. Nor is having an information literacy position on your staff enough. You have to be out playing a leadership role on your campus.

OK, now for the practical steps. This is mainly for directors, but those of you who aren't directors listen and go tell your director this is what they should be doing. First, directors, take time to think through this

concept for yourself. See if you really understand it. Whether you really think it's important. You only have so many political chips to use on campus; and, if you are going to use them for information literacy, you have to know that the issue is important to be willing not to do something else. Don't say you haven't the resources to move ahead. Which of us got a lot more resources when electronic journals came along? Anybody? We didn't. But we bought them anyway, because we knew we had to, because we knew they were important, because we knew there were some good tradeoffs in doing so. It is the same thing with information literacy. Unless your commitment is real, which means that you realign some resources within your library to do it, nobody is going to take you seriously.

Second, ask questions on campus; don't start in a vacuum. Find out what's going on. Find the best that is going on with information literacy on your campus but also find who are your potential colleagues. Is retention a major issue on your campus right now? Then make sure you have some contact with the retention committee helping them to figure how information literacy can help students stay in school. If the campus concern is attracting new students, be in there talking about how guaranteeing that students will graduate information literate will help attract students to your campus. You need to be out asking questions. You need to be talking with other deans saying "Well, what are the skills that graduates from your program need to have for the workforce today?" And keep asking the questions until they come around to critical thinking and problem solving. That lays the groundwork for your suggesting librarians coming in and actually designing curriculum with the faculty. Again don't be concerned about the vocabulary. Whether people are concerned with undergraduate research or problem based learning, talk so they can realize that you are talking about the same thing that they are.

Third, find out what are the barriers. For example, is there some barrier to retention, promotion and tenure criteria in promoting information literacy? Look at the infrastructure on your campus and see what needs to be changed. Obviously all this background work should, as step four, result in a plan. You can't do everything at once so you need to figure where you are going to get this best bang for your buck, and then make sure from the very beginning that you build in assessment. Seek to document that students are writing better papers and doing better reports because of the information literacy opportunities that they've had. In surveys of alumni make sure there are questions regarding how they use these skills in the workplace. This kind of documentation can ensure open doors in the future.

Finally, celebrate successes! Because you are going to have them. And one of the best things you can do is highlight the best of what the classroom faculty and librarians are already doing on your campus. Hearing from a peer about the pay-off from incorporating information literacy into the curriculum is the best way to inspire others. When faculty talk about the better papers and reports their students are doing, other faculty listen. Remember, we are not selling information literacy we are selling student success.

Now I want to tell you why I'm passionate on the topic of information literacy. I have three grandchildren. How many of you have a child that's very important to you: a child, a grandchild, a niece, a nephew? Raise your hands. Well for those of you who don't, I'm sorry, but for the rest of you: what do you want for the child you love? You want a good future, right? Now the fact that you're here today it bodes very well that the children you're concerned about are going to have good futures. They are going to be encouraged to go on and develop their skills and abilities. But that's not true for a lot of children. And if we cannot close that information gap, if the numbers of the have-nots keeps growing, the have-nots will weigh down our economies and our communities, so that the future of the children so dear to you will not be the best you would hope for them. And so that's why we have to be concerned about promoting information literacy. That's why it has to be a matter of passion. That's why I put information literacy far before digitizing collections. Because we are talking about the lives of real children. Because, if we can't get through to them, if we can't move the have-nots into becoming information haves, not only are they and their families and their futures going to be blighted, but it will also negatively impact on those who are nearest and dearest to us.

I also truly believe (some of you know that my Christian faith means a great deal to me) that we are promised that when we do unto the "least of these" [11] that our efforts will be blessed and will prosper. I consider information literacy a very real way of ministering unto the least of these, and so it carries with it the promise of blessings for those we serve and for us.

So please be passionate. Please, I would urge you, make a commitment before you leave here to do one thing you wouldn't have done if you hadn't heard me speak today. Speak to a policy maker you know socially or somebody on your campus. Talk to them and help that light bulb go off; because, if you don't do that, nothing is going to happen. Whether you are a library director or not, be a part of this really exciting call to make a difference for the better in our world.

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11. Matthew 25:40

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Last edited by J.F., 8th September, 2000.